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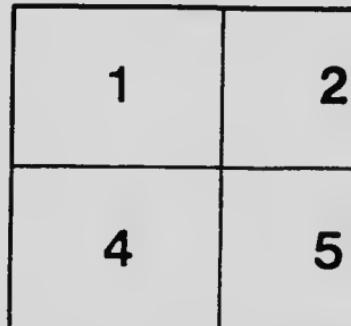
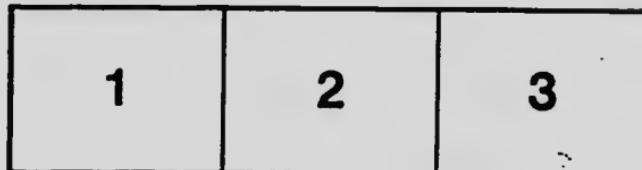
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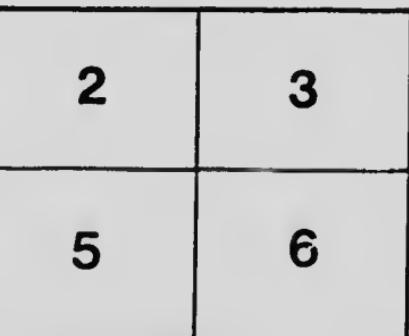
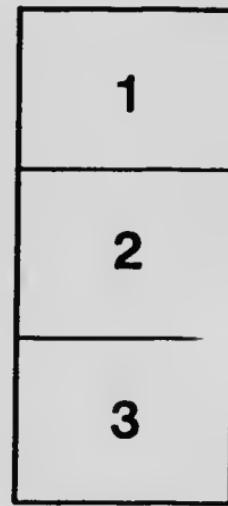
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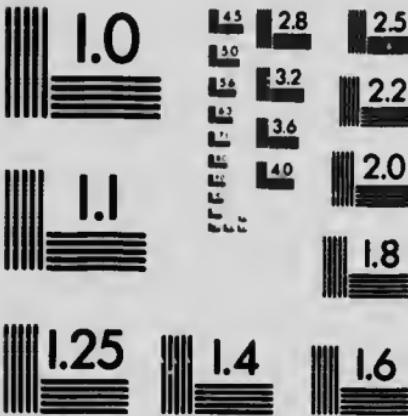
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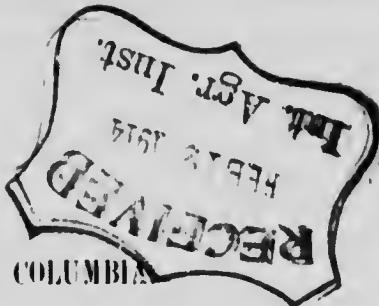
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PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. (LIVE-STOCK BRANCH.)

# CLOVER DODDER.

BY J. C. READY, SOIL AND CROP INSTRUCTOR.

THIS pest of clover and alfalfa is a parasitic plant belonging to the Morning Glory family. The rapidity with which it is establishing itself in new and widely separated districts throughout the Province makes it advisable that our farmers should acquaint themselves with the appearance of its seed and its habit of growth. There are about a hundred species of this plant, but only one species, technically known as *Cuscuta corythium*, has been reported in this Province. Another species, *Cuscuta arvensis*, is reported to have done a good deal of damage in some of the alfalfa-growing States. The seeds of the latter are larger than those of the species prevalent with us, and are difficult to separate from the alfalfa-seed. Our farmers would do well to guard against its introduction.

### THE SEED.

The seeds are of a light reddish colour, from 1-32 to 1-16 inch in diameter. Under an ordinary lens they appear to be short and irregularly kidney-shaped; under a low-power microscope they appear to be more of a conical shape, slightly hollowed in the base, and seem to be covered with minute crystals. A wire screen of a mesh of 1-20 inch will remove the seed quite effectively from alfalfa-seed, but in the case of clover-seed a quantity of the smaller seed will pass through with the dodder-seed.

The seed is of strong vitality and will live over in the soil for two or three years. Wherever it is known that dodder has ripened on a field, ploughing should not be done deeply, else the upper layer of soil may be freed from the pest, but the lower soil hold the seed and allow the possibility of reinfesting the land at some future time.

### THE PLANT.

The seed germinates in the soil in the usual way. The plant soon comes in contact with the clover or alfalfa and attaches itself to it by tiny "suckers," and shortly afterward loses its own roots. For the remainder of its life it seems to depend on the juices of other plants for its sustenance. The stalks or vines are reddish in colour and twine about the clover or alfalfa plant, but rarely grow out to the tips of these plants, seeming to prefer the shade and moisture lower down. The flowers are quite small, a pinkish white in colour, and grow in dense clusters. The ripened pods contain from one to four seeds.

The pest usually starts in small centres, gradually extending the area of its work in what are called "rings." Within these "rings" a dense "mat" forms,



composed of the whined vines of the dodder and the ill-fated clover. These "rings" are formed by the tips of the vines reaching out in all directions and attaching themselves to other clover-plants.

#### METHOD OF CONTROL.

Where only a few small "rings" appear, these may be controlled by mowing the clover and dodder into the centre of the "ring," allowing the pile to dry and burning it. Where this is done, a large enough area should be included in the "ring" to make sure that no straggling vines have been left to mature seed. It will also be necessary to inspect the mowed area subsequent to the burning to see that none of the vines twined close to the roots of the clover close to the ground have survived. If any survive the burning they may succeed in producing seed.

Where large areas are affected, the best-known method is to plough shallow and follow with frequent cultivations. Land badly infected should not be reseeded to clover for at least two years, but should be summer-fallowed or sown to inter-tiling crops. As in the case of all other pests that are allowed to gain a foothold, the eradication of the dodder means an additional expense and a consequent reduction of profits.

The farmer can scarcely be too careful in the purchase of his seed. Good seed costs more, but is generally the cheapest in the end.

If, however, the pest has gained a foothold, prevention of traffic between infected and uninfected areas will help to control the dissemination of the dodder-seed. There is danger of infection from the feeding of hay containing the dodder-vines, hence care should be exercised in the purchase of feed. A good system of rotation of crops will also help to check the invasions of this weed, as well as those of other weeds, insect and fungus pests.

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